

the best of everything, but the last time they counted, they lost 13,000 voters.

I say that referendum should be a part of the constitution and should be workable. 70,000 people to sign a petition is too high. If we are going to put it out of reach, let's not even consider it. I would like to reject this proposal.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Schloeder.

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: At this time I yield two minutes to Delegate Scanlan, and the microphone.

DELEGATE SCANLAN: Thank you, Delegate Schloeder.

One cardinal phrase that I brought to this Convention is that we should strengthen our legislature and not mistrust it on every possible occasion.

If I had my druthers I would prefer an even more severe limitation to the right of referendum now that we have a General Assembly that is truly representative of the people of this State; but I am willing to go along. I prefer Delegate Gilchrist's amendment, and I hope no matter what happens on that, that we do make the necessary changes in section 3 to eliminate the ambiguity contained in the words "after the date of enactment," which in a few moments I think we will see as meaningless; but within that context I certainly support the amendment by Delegate Chabot. At least the figure for registered voters is reasonably certain; it rises slowly but gradually each year. It is true, as Delegate Pascal says, when you have a reregistration on occasion you will lose substantial numbers from the voters' lists, but those quickly catch up, and the number at least is a gradually certain increasing figure as opposed to the more volatile number of the total number of votes cast for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election.

I think in that respect, although it is perhaps not as drastic a difference between the Majority Report as some think to be the case, I believe it is worthy of your support, and it has the offsetting feature that it does make the gathering of signatures a little bit easier.

I must just reply to one comment by Chairman Koss. She indicated that somehow you would be cutting back on the number of people who would be eligible to sign a petition. Section 4 as now proposed, and I hope it is deleted later, requires the signer of a petition, of course, to be a registered voter, so I do not think that comment was germane.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss.

DELEGATE KOSS: I yield to Mrs. Cardin.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Cardin.

DELEGATE CARDIN: Mr. Chairman and fellow delegates: It is most unfortunate that last week you had delivered to you, and today, the last pages of a report called "Direct Legislation," by one Frank Ralabate. I say it is most unfortunate because over two-thirds of your questions would have been answered, had this report been in your hands when it should have been distributed. This report was not in the hands of the Committee until we had duplicated over two-thirds of that work.

However, you will find in the majority of the country, in the 22 states that have referendum, all use a number based on the gubernatorial vote, irrespective of the officer for whom they vote in that election, or the highest officer. None of them use the registered base.

Secondly, the median percentage for voters signatures is between 5 and 6 percent. We recognize in the State of Maryland that for a short period the referendum procedure was of use to the extent it was over-used, so your Committee recommended raising the number from the present Constitution of three percent to five percent, which is already an increase of some 18,000 signatures.

I do not know how many of you have secured signatures in the past, but I have worked on petitions, and I can tell you that it takes anywhere from five to ten minutes to qualify an individual who is going to sign a petition intelligently. I am not talking about sitting in front of a shopping center and simply asking signatures with no validity behind them. The affidavit that is required to go along with the petitions that are turned into the secretary of state, or to whomever the governor's representative would be, states very clearly that you have ascertained that the person who signed is a registered voter in specific counties. This is not a fraudulent, false, or easy thing to do, because you are responsible for this affidavit.

There are many other difficulties. I would suggest to you that the Committee, although Committee reports are not sanctified anymore, unanimously voted on the referendum. To put it at 70,000, to put suspension at a figure of 35,000 and thirty days is impossible, and I would like to add one other item; the matter of volunteers